

The Life of Loue

By

Anna E. Satterlee

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Satterlee, Anna E.

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The Life of Love

The Life of Love

The Gospel Story of Jesus the Christ

In Verse

BY

ANNA E. SATTERLEE

Author of

"Love's Equality," "The Wonder Girl," Etc.

DAVID GRAHAM FISCHER CORPORATION

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To

All who believe that LOVE redeems

FOREWORD

“The Life of Love” was primarily written for and read at an Easter service in a church of the Middle West, by request of its pastor, the Rev. J. William Carson. More recently, the poem has been revised by the author, and submitted for approval to a few friends who are well versed in theological lore. Following are extracts from their very generous responses:

“The author of ‘The Life of Love’ gives an unusually vivid conception of a most interesting and valuable subject. The facts are clearly stated, and the wonderful scenes depicted are couched in language that is attractive and choice. There is nothing commonplace about the poem. To have so many vital happenings brought together in a conspicuously small compass gives an added charm and advantage.”—*J. William Carson, Congregational Minister.*

(Present address, Seattle, Washington.)

From Dr. Carl S. Patton, pastor of the First Congregational Church, Los Angeles, Calif.:

"I like your poem very much, and I hope it may meet with appreciative acceptance."

Rev. Morris H. Turk, D. D., Congregational minister, Portland, Maine, writes:

"I believe that you have written an exceedingly strong and helpful interpretation of the philosophy of the redemption as expressed in the life of our Lord. Its greatest strength lies in making Love dominant. I have read your poem with a great deal of pleasure."

Rev. Harlow S. Mills, D. D., founder of "The Larger Parish"—which includes several communities with headquarters at Benzonia, Mich., said:

"I have read your poem with genuine interest. In rhyme and rhythm it is complete, and the ideas expressed are quite in line with the best thinking of our times. Here, "The Old, Old Story" has a new and beautiful setting that I am sure will bring it home to many hearts with freshness and force. I consider it a valuable addition to the literature that has been evoked by the study of the life of Jesus Christ."

Canto I

The Life of Love

Before this wide expanse of Earth,
Or greater Universe had birth;
Before the eons marked by time:
In past infinity, sublime,
Dwelt Love within the heart of God—
For God was Love and Love was God.

“Love seeketh not its own”, we know;
Exists its blessings to bestow.
To satisfy God’s heart of love
Creation grew—below, above,
Vast realms were filled with creature life:
A life of love and love of life.

Within a garden beautiful
Dwelt man—God’s image—dutiful
And blest with Peace and Plenty’s store,
Nor wanting less, nor wanting more,
Till,—saddest thing of creature-fate,—
Sin found its way through Eden’s gate.

Besides the riches man might share,
A wondrous tree implanted there,
Held knowledge man had not attained;
And yet, the untried knowledge gained,
God saw would lead to cruel strife—
To forceful sacrifice of life.
So man was warned to test it not,
Lest good in ill should be forgot;
And then, as now, the still, small voice
Commanded souls to make their choice
Between an Eden: Love within,
Or Hades—gloom of death by Sin.

Love's opposite though vile, seemed wise;
Approaching in a serpent's guise,
Its tongue,—a soul-corruptive fang,—
The praises of man's freedom sang:
“But use thy will,—God gave it thee,—
And eat of the forbidden tree.
“Thou shalt not surely die,” it said,
“Shalt learn of Wisdom's ways instead;
As gods the good and evil know,
And honor to thyself bestow”.
Thus contradicting Heaven's decree

With bold persuasiveness, its plea—
Its promises, appeared as fair
As those of Love, and true as fair.

The subtle tempter won that day
When man gave *self* the mastery,
Nor felt that death was in its train
With untold grief and bitter pain,
Nor realized until too late,
That selfishness engenders hate.
Thus yielding to the carnal thought,
False freedom was most dearly bought.
Apart from Eden man must toil
'Mid thorns and briers of the soil.
And Love—dear Love—was grieved to see
Sweet Peace displaced by Misery.
Yet Love within God's heart was strong;
He willed that it should conquer wrong.

A remnant, taking Love's advice,
Strove to re-merit Paradise.
The longing for a better state,
To prophecy was antedate—
Gave rise to prophecy, we hold,

For good we long for makes us bold
To seek that good; expectancy
Is thus but wise philosophy.

To godly souls this vision came:
A Love incarnate who should claim
Redemption for humanity—
Deliverance from impurity,
Gross ignorance and all akin.
On Him should rest the curse of Sin.

A Man of Sorrows, He; despised,
Rejected, ever criticized,
Oppressed and to the slaughter brought,
His innocence accounted naught,
Yet bearing all in meekness—sad,
But strong and beautiful as sad.

Ah, Love of Heaven! That it could be
Humanity would stray from Thee,
While Thou didst wait upon each thought
Aspiring heavenword, or wrought
In faintest prayer, or hymn of praise,
Or smallest deed which grace portrays.

Canto II

The Life of Love

'T was nineteen hundred years and more
Ago, that Christians told it o'er:
This story of Love's sacrifice,
In which, inherent, was the prize
Of God's high-calling, offered man,
Revealing His redemptive plan.

They told of visions strange and sweet—
For such occurrences most meet—
Which came to souls in Galilee;
Of these, a maiden fair to see,
And saintly in her mien and speech
As one should be, good angels teach.

And never yet was maid so blest
By angel's marvelous behest.
Her soul did magnify the Lord
And praise Him for His gracious word;
Her joy should joy to nations bring—

The mother of a Heavenly King:
Of Jesus, named through Gabriel
To be a world's Immanuel!

And then a vision, glory-bright,
To shepherds with their flocks by night
Within Judean field. A voice—
Angelic tidings that rejoice,
A holy minstrelsy proclaimed
The Savior's birth, of God ordained.

To Bethlehem the shepherds went
In haste, and wondered as they went,
Upon the vision. Honored they,
Above the multitude, for aye.
The secret theirs which angels held,
And gladness all their fears dispelled.
And there, upon that fateful day,
The babe within a manger lay.

Unconscious was the pomp of Earth;
In yonder palace wanton mirth
And feasting wasted hours away.
The tyrant, Herod, there held sway.
'T was not for such as he, to see

The good which came from Galilee:
To humble souls God gives the power;
The eye of Faith hath richest dower;
And shepherds faithful to His word,
Saw in the Child, the Christ—their Lord.

The simple peasant, maiden wife,
As Joseph, Mary, known in life,
And parents of the wondrous Babe,
No wordy argument essayed
To prove His super-excellence,
For over all was Providence—
His hand in their environment.
How could they doubt what He had sent,
Or that His Own He still would bless?
Not theirs to question, nor redress,
Nor eulogize; but theirs to trust—
While life should last, obey and trust.

Among the Infant's worshippers
Were Magi—sage philosophers,
Who in the East had seen His star
And gladly hastened from afar.
Rich gifts they brought of worth untold:

Of frankincense and myrrh and gold,
For Him they sought as Jewish King.
And this did consternation bring:
The story came to Herod's ears—
Aroused his envy and his fears;
And all Jerusalem was stirred.
Was this fulfillment long deferred,
Of Jewish hope and Jewish prayer?
Was that young Babe in manger bare,
Messiah—world-wide conqueror
They claimed as their deliverer?

Within the temple's lofty space,
Anear this tetrarch's dwelling-place,
The Babe whom godly ones adored,
Was soon presented to the Lord.
Here Simeon, whose days were spent
In waiting for the great advent,
Gave praise to God, who sent to Earth
Salvation, through the Christ-Child's birth;
And Anna, saint and prophetess,
Proclaimed Him Israel's Hope—none less
Than their Redeemer. Mary, o'er
Their sayings pondered: wondered more

And more at each strange circumstance
Of manifold significance.
But Herod, raging, sought to slay
The Child, who erst might thwart his way.
And Joseph, duly warned, took flight
With Mary and the Child, by night,
To Egypt. After Herod's death,
They came and dwelt at Nazareth.
Thus Christ was called a Nazarene;
There with His parents, oft was seen.

When twelve years old He went with them,
Once more, to famed Jerusalem,
And in His parents' kindly care,
The Feast of Passover did share.
Returning on the homeward way,
The parents journeyed for a day,
Supposing Jesus with their friends.
Not finding Him, they made amends
By searching long, with sorrowing hearts,
In city streets and busy marts;
And when at length, they saw the Lad
Within the temple, they were glad,
But with the gladness felt surprise

That He, of tender age and size,
Should be with learned doctors, there
Discussing subjects deep and rare.
The doctors, too, were much impressed
By His intelligence and zest
For serious things most boys eschew.
To Heavenly instincts He was true.

When Mary questioned His delay,
With wisdom manifest always,
He answered her: "Why sought ye me?"
And: "Wist ye not that I must be
About my Father's business?" She
Found this hard to understand. He,
Obedient to their command,
Accompanied His parents and
Was subject to their further will,
In wisdom gaining ever, till
He reached a rich maturity,
Conforming to Divinity.

And then His ministry began:
Chief ministry of love to man.
His messenger near Jordan taught,

His speech with grave monition fraught,
And there the Savior was baptized
To show this simple rite, so prized,
Doth every honest soul impress,
And help fulfill all righteousness.
Forthwith, to this brave messenger,
Appeared a higher harbinger—
This glory, winging like a dove
From the immensity above,
Descended on the Christ. John heard
A confirmation of the word
He preached. Here, the “Beloved Son”!
He felt his special work was done.

And driven to the wilderness,
Christ divers spirits met, to bless
Or curse His kingly majesty.
Full forty days, a travesty
Of kinship such as His should be,
His mental eyes were made to see.
The world’s magnificence and might
Were proffered Him as lordly right,
Would he submit Himself to guile—
But worship that deceiver vile,

Who in God's Eden stole away
The brightness of the early Day.
And who can tell what depths of care,
What solemn fast, what strength of prayer
Resisted worldliness of Sin,
The grewsome wilderness within;
And what depression Love endured
That "Peace on Earth" might be assured?

This story that of yore was told,
Speaks of disciples who were bold
To follow wheresoe'er He led,
E'en though no place to lay His head
Had He—a wanderer by choice,
That others might the more rejoice.

His acts of mercy, freely wrought,
Brought anxious, thronging crowds, who thought
To have Him heal their sick. The blind,
The deaf, the lame, diseased of mind
And worse—diseased of soul—were nigh,
Were healed in answer to their cry.
E'en winds and waves obeyed His will—
Were conquered by His "Peace, be still".

Sometimes upon a mountain-side,
Or by some quiet lake, He tried
To make the people understand
Truths they were loth to comprehend.
And twice He fed the multitude—
A mingled crowd—refined and rude.
On sabbath days He often taught
Within the synagogues, and brought
To listening ears new meanings to
Old prophecies. Could these be true?
His town's folk disbelieved His speech
And though him boastful thus to teach.
Among His family were none
Whom they considered great—not one.
Amid their threats our Lord withdrew
From this, His childhood home. He knew
Among such faithless souls, His deeds
Should fail to meet apparent needs.
Again, from out the temple, fair;
His Father's house—a house of prayer—
He drove a thievish horde who dared
To desecrate the place, and bared
Their sordid motives. Unafraid,
And deeply stirred, His mien betrayed

A strength such men could not withstand.
To right a wrong He gave command.

The doctors of the law engaged
To question Him—became enraged
At His distinctive scorn of creeds;
At His unlawful(?) gracious deeds.
Why heal upon the sabbath day?
Why call those hypocrites who pray
As do the Pharisees? And why
Those simple publicans descry?—
With publicans and sinners eat?—
Did he not know a better seat
Was with the lofty, learned scribe,
Or with the rich of Jewish tribe?
And thus believing His the blame,
And seeming to believe the same
Interpretations of their law
Which they had held before in awe,
They soon became acknowledged foes,
And added to increasing woes.

Yet some among the rich and wise
The blessed Christ did not despise.

They could not well forget His deeds,
Whose life was "more than meat", or creeds;
And many hungry souls and meek,
His way of righteousness did seek.

In these late months of toil and strife,
With ignorance so widely rife,
The Savior lived the bitterness
Which rankled in the wilderness.
'Twas then prophetic phantasy,
But now, a harsh reality.
His flesh rebelled. His spirit, brave
And true to sense of right, should save
Always from any taint of wrong.
Yet, e'en hosannas of the throng
Who loved Him well, could not erase
The mark of sadness from His face.
He who with suffering sympathized,
Must suffer. This He realized.
And He must die, who gave Himself
To save a world from death! The pelf
Of false ambition—worldly gain—
Was not for Him, but grievous pain:

The pain of a Gethsemane—
A cross—a lingering agony!

Had not His soul refreshment found,
In higher realms where joys abound,
He could not well have borne His grief,
Nor brought to others such relief.
One night upon a mountain high,
With Peter, James and John near by,
This super-man to them endeared,
In vision glorified appeared.
His face was as the sun and bright
His garments—glistening and white.
They saw beside, two men of old:
Elias and that leader bold
Named Moses, who conversed with Him;
Above them all, a cloud with rim
O'ershadowing, and there, a voice
That made their trembling hearts rejoice,
Assurance gave—as once before
On Jordan's banks—their Lord was more
Than human potentate: God's own
“Beloved Son”, was He. God's own!
What honor could surpass such claim?

To learn of Him should be their aim.
And humbly down the mountain steep
They followed Him—were told to keep
The vision secret for a time—
But few could grasp such facts sublime.

For one brief spell He turned away
To friends who dwelt at Bethany;
And as He sat with them at meat,
A woman came, her Lord to greet.
A box of precious nard she poured
Upon His head whom she adored.
And some, indignant o'er the deed,
Perceiving not the Savior's need,
Asked: "Why this waste?" But Jesus said:
" 'T is my anointing—" Further, said:
"She did it for my burial".

Ah! What was that?—His burial?
They could not, would not understand;
Knew not that one would soon demand
A price for His betrayal. No!
They thought it could not happen so.

Jerusalem with life o'erflowed.
'Twas Passover; Contention's goad

In higher courts sped Destiny.
Dull Envy, Malice, Treachery
Were all combined to plot His harm—
To thrill the people with alarm.
“Pretender, He!”—would reign by stealth.
His death should be for nations’ health.

The sacred Paschal feast was done—
The stillness of the night was on.
Beneath the deepened olive shade,
The Savior, heavy-hearted, prayed.
Great drops of blood were on His brow.
Could His opponents see Him now
Would they relent? For such a grief
Was there no surety of relief?
His soul found none, and cried;: “Not mine,
My Father—*not my will, but thine.*”
And then the quiet of the night
Was broken by a stranger sight:
A multitude with swords and staves,
The traitor, Judas, and the knaves
Of priests and Pharisees, who staid
Until a kiss, the Son betrayed!

Disciples once quite bold, were seized
With fear and fled; and unappeased,
The mob its single captive led
To palace-judgment hall. None plead
His cause—His trial, mockery,
Which ended upon Calvary!

We picture to ourselves the place;
The cruel, frenzied populace;
The words of Pilate they provoked;
The dreadful curse the Jews invoked;
The crown of thorns; the fiercer scourge;
THE CROSS; and hear the solemn dirge
Of Nature, sounding as He dies,
The breath of love within His sighs!

Canto III

The Life of Love

Praise God for Love's high-sovereignty!
The grave may win mortality;
Through glory-paths, Love finds His way
To kinship in Eternal Day!
*The Savior lives! and Easter Morn
Of hopelessness the grave hath shorn!*

Not they of olden time alone,
Have seen the risen Lord, we own:
Aye, all who thirst for righteousness,
His gracious presence now will bless.
Endowed with happiness on Earth,
Their every day to joy gives birth.
With trusting hearts, whate'er betide,
Their every need shall be supplied;
For they are brother, sister, friend,
Who on His truth and grace depend—
The riches of His kingdom, theirs;
Divinity with them He shares.
Joint-heirs with Him, they too, shall see
The glories of Eternity!

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